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Chief Pocatello, the "White Plume"/The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre

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seize Morton's data to support their ideas of the innate inferiority of non-white peoples. Ephriam George Squire turned ethnological study toward Indian legends and symbols. His work centered on the Indian mounds of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys, and he tried to demonstrate how primitive people worldwide used the same symbols and ideas. Squire was an active supporter of the need to do fieldwork for solid ethnological study. His contemporary Henry Rowe Schoolcraft agreed that working with Indians or with cultural relics produced more accurate results than studying them in a library. He investigated languages and myths among the Great Lakes region tribes. As a result of his study Schoolcraft saw tribal people as childish and backward, so he supported a program of government care and leadership for them. Lewis Henry Morgan was Bieder's last case study. A strong proponent of the Asian migration theory of Indian origins, he accepted the idea of social evolution. Thus Indian society stood below the level of white society, but was capable of rising to equality if given the opportunity to do so. Bieder presents Morgan's ideas as an important link between the earlier nineteenth-century Enlightenment tradition and theories developing by the end of the era under consideration.

Through the careers of these men the author follows the major disputes over the social evolution of races, the origins of humans on the earth, the impact of biology, culture, and the environment on civilization, and the hotly disputed argument over library study versus field work. Bieder's discussion provides considerable insight into the development of ethnology and the ideas that helped shape national Indian policies. His research is thorough, his ideas are clearly stated, and his conclusions are sensible. Some might quarrel about using a biographical approach, but the narrative places each man clearly into the intellectual context of the time. The result is an excellent discussion of this subject.

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

ROGER L. NICHOLS

Chief Pocatello, The "White Plume," by Brigham D. Madsen. Bonneville Books. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1986. x, 142 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$6.95 paper.

The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre, by Brigham D. Madsen. Utah Centennial Series 1. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985. xxi, 285 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, chronology, appendix, bibliography, index. \$19.95 cloth.

Brigham Madsen, a historian of thirty years' standing among the Mormons of Utah and the intermountain West, has authored or edited thir-

teen volumes of regional history, five of which have focused on native societies in Utah and southern Idaho: the Bannock, Lemhi, and Northern Shoshoni. The latest of Madsen's efforts are the life of Pocatello, chief of a band of Shoshoni, and a detailed study of the events precipitating the slaughter of more than two hundred native people in 1863 on the Bear River in southern Idaho. Unfortunately, Madsen does not move beyond the confines of biography in *Chief Pocatello*, and he rarely casts the Bear River Massacre in a context broader than itself. The result for both books is disappointment in the work at hand, and a hope that Madsen's thorough research and willingness to criticize Mormon behavior will prompt others to venture beyond.

Madsen describes his brief volume on Pocatello as a "short biography" meant for "the schoolchildren and teachers of Idaho." Madsen, who began his career at the Pingree School in Pocatello, wanted the youth of the state to share his curiosity and admiration for the Shoshoni people. The book traces the major historical events of southern Idaho during Pocatello's life, focusing primarily on white settlement, violent conflict, and establishment of the Northern Shoshoni reservation. Despite Madsen's disclaimer of a targeted audience, he seems unsure of the level of sophistication to achieve for his readers. The story is at times too demanding for high school students, yet somewhat elementary for college courses.

Chief Pocatello suffers from three shortcomings: the limits of biography, reliance on anecdotal material when no other sources exist, and a failure to place the subject in the context of larger historical forces affecting the region and the nation in the middle years of the nineteenth century. Few sources are available for an individual like Pocatello who did not speak, read, or write the English language. Those documents cited—local newspapers, agency and military records, and pioneer diaries—can only intimate the motives and behavior of a tribal leader. Madsen does not use anthropological studies of the Shoshoni to project back into Pocatello's time, nor does he question the accuracy of the sources upon which he relies.

The problems inherent in *Chief Pocatello* echo throughout Madsen's longer assessment of the Bear River Massacre. Because the author attempts a more scholarly study, the tone and style of *The Shoshoni Frontier* are more smooth and connected. Madsen asks a valid question: Why have historians of Utah and surrounding states ignored the confrontation between General Patrick Connor's California Volunteers and the native people of southern Idaho? He then reconstructs the chain of events preceding the massacre, highlighting the pressures of Mormons, goldseekers, and pioneers on Shoshoni land, water, and game animals.

The Shoshoni Frontier is more comprehensive than *Chief Pocatello*. Yet it too leaves the reader unfulfilled, as one becomes overwhelmed by the persistent strain of violence between Shoshoni and white settlers. The anecdotes seem interchangeable; retaliatory raids of 1861 read like those of 1855. Madsen is willing to criticize Mormon and non-Mormon alike for insensitivity and duplicity towards the Shoshoni. But one is left with the suspicion that conflict proved too easy a vehicle to carry Madsen's story to the readers of the Utah Centennial series, despite the editor's admonition that authors seek a "larger focus" to allow Utah history to rise above its provincialism and "offer a book with significance for the broader West" (xii).

The ideas Madsen touches on in *The Shoshoni Frontier* are worthy of more careful study by anyone interested in the nineteenth-century West. Violence on the overland trails emanated from the behavior of strangers confronting a land (the West) and people (native societies) that did not remind the settlers of the life they left behind. As neophytes far from home, it is not surprising that Mormons, goldseekers, and pioneers alike would strike out in frustration at obstacles, whether natural or human, that they could neither understand nor easily conquer.

The conditions and historical forces at work on American society in the 1840s and 1850s also affected the wanderers on the westward trails. But Madsen spends little time assessing the conflicting impulses of expansionism, urbanization, and the dislocation of a rural culture by incipient industrialization. People whose lives are out of balance rarely find tranquility elsewhere, and the failure of the Shoshoni to accommodate every demand of white migrants was a tragic if inevitable result.

Finally, the Mormons exerted a unique influence on the region. Madsen comments on Brigham Young's farsighted and pragmatic policy of feeding Indians rather than fighting them. Yet given the status of Mormon society in its formative years, any other policy would have been hypocritical. The Mormons had fled persecution in the East and Midwest in order to follow a life they believed was ordained by God. To then kill Indians and steal their land would cast the Saints as no better than the raiders of Nauvoo who lynched Joseph Smith and launched his disciples on the hegira to the Salt Lake basin. The inability of the Mormons to coexist with the Shoshoni, and the failure of Brigham Young to accomplish expansion as governor of Utah Territory and peace as the Indian superintendent, echo throughout the West of the nineteenth century. The Bear River Massacre, while indeed tragic, was but one thread in a larger fabric woven by a young nation expanding without giving much thought to the consequences of its actions.

Madsen does not study the responses of other regions to these forces. Nor does he look at General Connor's volunteers in the context of the Civil War in the West, or of James Carleton's treatment of New Mexico's Navajos and Apaches at the Bosque Redondo (1862-1866). One cannot rely solely on documents written by nation-builders, such as the Office of Indian Affairs, the army, and the Mormon church, to question the wisdom of such a policy. Nor can a singular emphasis on conflict and violence address the daily life and community traditions of both whites and Indians.

These concerns notwithstanding, Brigham Madsen's honesty and diligence represent an advance over his peers. Future students of the region would do well to consult his work as they widen their angle of vision on Utah, the Mormons, native peoples, and the nineteenth-century West.

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

MICHAEL WELSH

Brigham Young: American Moses, by Leonard J. Arrington. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985. xvii, 522 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendixes, bibliographical essay, index. \$24.95 cloth.

The Life and Thought of Orson Pratt, by Breck England. Foreword by Leonard J. Arrington. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985. xvi, 359 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$14.95 cloth.

Changes in the manner in which historians define their work no less than changes within contemporary American society have served to provoke new interest in the history, thought, and sociology of Mormonism. This most successful of nineteenth-century American religious and communitarian movements was long ignored except by Mormon scholars and anti-Mormon polemicists. Yet some of the very factors that formerly led to neglect have contributed to contemporary interest. Mormonism is clearly a popular movement that emerged from the ranks of common people. Mormon theology weaves together biblical themes and American experience to create a millennialism that, though unique, is closely akin to that which dominated American religious thought at least until the latter years of the nineteenth century. Mormon plural marriage and economic practices are regarded as radical, but few religious movements are as comfortable as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with the climate of conservatism that now dominates American political, economic, and intellectual life. One evidence of contemporary interest in this movement has been the emergence of a growing body of fine historical studies of Mormonism

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